

[Futha Higginbotham]

#15 Folk Stuff - Range Lore

Range-lore

Annie McAulay

Maverick, Texas

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RANGE-LORE

Futha Higginbotham was born in Erath County in 1888. He moved with his parents to Coke County in 1889.

Mr. Higginbotham says: "My father and grandfather before me were stock farmers and ranchers. I have lived on a ranch north of Bronte all of my life. After my father's death, my mother continued to live on the old place and asked me to take it over, and so I have continued as a rancher and stock farmer at the same place.

"I used to help with the round-ups when I wasn't more'n twelve or fourteen years old. They'd always make me help hold the cuts. But one thing I was proud of, they'd always let me go to dinner with the first bunch.

"I began trying to ride broncs when I wasn't more'n fourteen or fifteen, I guess. I got throwed a lot, but never [???] 2 seriously hurt. We boys thought Old Dick Hazelton was the greatest feller in the world, because he was such a good bronc buster. He was the hero of ranch boys then. My greatest aspiration was to ride like him. He was a good buster. He could ride anything.

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"I gave up the idea of being a bronc rider after a few years and settled down to real ranch work.

"When I was about fifteen years old, another boy and I drove a bunch of cattle (about a hundred head) to Sweetwater. We were driving them from the Richard place near Bronte, and Mr. Richard told us to try to have them at Sweetwater by night. I guess we rushed them too much and when we got within a few miles of town they were so tired they'd hardly drive. Some of them began to lie down. One steer, nearly one year old, refused to go an inch further. He just couldn't stand on his feet. Somehow or other we managed to get him up on the horse with me. We continued that way very slowly for two or three miles until we met Mr. Richard who had come out from Sweetwater to meet us. He put the yearling in his buggy and we managed to get the herd into town about ten o'clock that night. I was sure tired, too.

"I worked in Crockett County fourteen months, about the time I was grown. I guess I was nineteen years old. I worked for Clayton and Childress on their seventy-five section ranch. They worked eight or ten men regular. There were some drift fences on the creek that were sure hard to keep repaired. Seemed like we had lots of rain and every time it rained the creeks got up and washed the fences down or damaged them.

"Every thing was fenced so our rounding up wasn't hard. They had corrals in which to herd and cut them, and branding chutes to brand them in.

"I've known a few good women riders. The Hannah sisters and also the Calloway sisters. They lived on ranches near Blackwell and did regular ranch work. The Calloway girls used to get lots of kick out of going to a dance and shooting 'em up, as they called it. They considered themselves wild cowgirls, but no one really took them seriously. Dessie Calloway, the older sister, would ride pitchin' horses. She especially liked to ride high jumpers. They seldom got too tough for her to ride. After their marriages I'm told they have lived very quiet and contented lives."

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REFERENCE: -Futha Higginbotham, Bronte, Texas. Interviewed August 19, 1938.